

Carolina country

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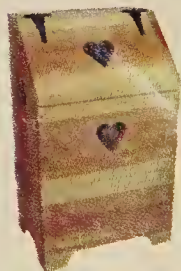
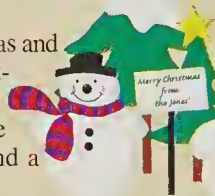
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IF YOU LIKE TO CUT PATTERNS OUT OF WOOD, THIS IS THE SET FOR YOU! YOU'LL FIND A TREASURE HOUSE OF IDEAS INSIDE. 412 BEAUTIFUL WOODWORKING PATTERNS AND DESIGNS.

(By Frank K. Wood)

FC&A, a Peachtree City, Georgia, publisher, announced today that it is practically "giving away" an all-new set of "412 Woodworking Patterns."

- Wooden furniture for patio and porch.
- Stylish reindeer will give your yard a festive holiday touch.
- "Garden golfer" whirls all day long, while works of art bless your hearth and home.
- Angels for the kitchen, cute critters galore, neighborly welcome for a door.
- Large outdoor patterns add seasonal fun, create delightful kitchen gadgets and household helpers for everyone.
- One-of-a-kind birdhouse designs, a victorian-style holder for beanie bag "finds."
- Shimmering snowflakes, santas and sleighs, a Christmas countdown number the days.
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- A 3-D village, sleepytime rabbit and a frog that hangs out over your door.
- Noah's ark toy, a garland for teacher, clever animal notepad keepers.
- An adorable armoire and baby cradle, dressing screen, and a tree-top table.
- Classy corner shelves, handy peg racks, decorative vine and animals that shine.
- Unique intarsia patterns, dazzling sunflower birdhouse clock.
- A cabinet for your TV and VCR, western wranglers for your little buckaroo.
- Child-size "teddy bear" chair, santa pull-toy, kids can ride away on a galloping horse!
- Pretty birds, curious cats and bouncing bunnies frolic among wooden sunflowers.
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- And much, much more!



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"Roaches!"

I HAD THEM BY THE HUNDREDS, BUT NOW I DON'T HAVE A SINGLE ROACH. (By J. Robson)

Have you ever seen a roach run out of a bowl as you were about to put food in it? Well, I have. Just turn out the lights and an army of roaches would attack the whole house.

I had tried smelly sprays and other insecticides to get rid of them. But they just kept coming back. Nothing worked for very long, but then . . .

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To order a bottle, just return this notice with your name and address and a check for \$7.99 plus \$2.00 shipping and handling, and we will send you a bottle of Roach Kill. Or, for only \$9.99 plus \$2.00 shipping and handling, you can get a large, economy-size bottle big enough to treat your whole house, including your garage and basement.

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All orders mailed by February 19, 2001, will receive a free gift, guaranteed. Order right away!

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Build all these wooden favorites. Illustrated plans include intricately detailed patterns and complete instructions. To order a set, just return this notice with your name and address and a check for \$7.99 plus \$3.00 shipping and handling, and we will send you "412 Woodworking Patterns." Or, for only \$9.99 plus \$3.00 shipping and handling, you can get both the basic set and an extra 100 patterns.

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North Carolina's electric cooperatives provide reliable, safe and affordable electric service to 750,000 homes, farms and businesses in North Carolina. The 27 electric cooperatives are each member-owned, not-for-profit and overseen by a board of directors elected by the membership.



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Has your address changed?

Carolina Country magazine is available monthly to members of North Carolina's electric cooperatives. If you are a member of one of these cooperatives but do not receive Carolina Country, you may request a subscription by calling Member Services at the office of your cooperative. If your address has changed, please inform your cooperative.

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Looking over northwestern Ashe County into Virginia. © by Steven McBride/Picturesque 2000.

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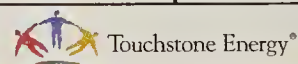
Recipes from Tri-County EMC's new 60th anniversary cookbook.

The Power Of Human Connections.

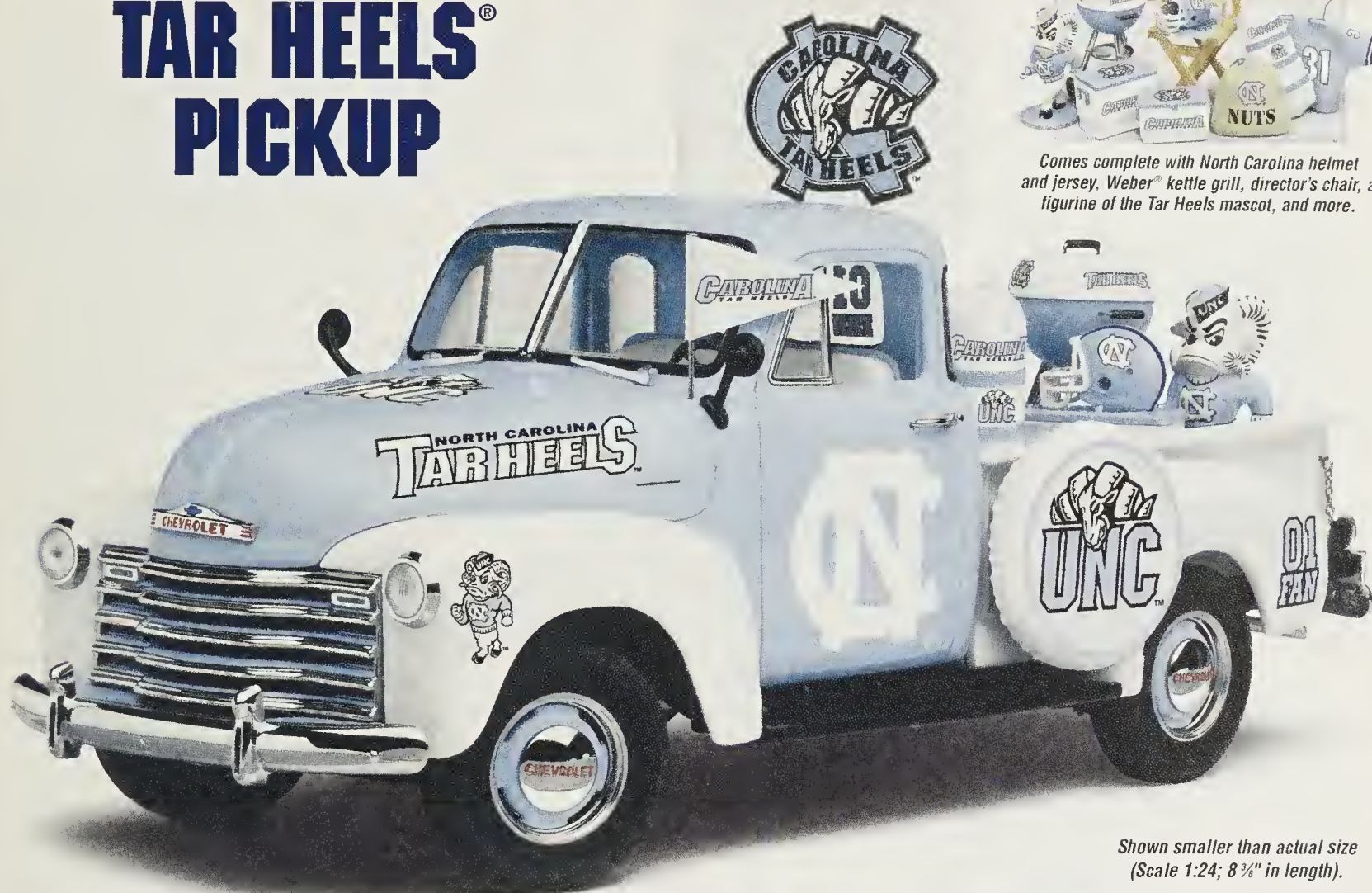


8:45 PM, Asheboro, NC. We all have a powerful connection to the place we call home. And we all want to make our homes better places to be. That's why we go beyond electricity to bring you products and services that make yours safer and more comfortable. It's just another way we're working to give you the power you need to make all your human connections — which is what our connection to you is all about.

North Carolina's
electric cooperatives



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91586...



A delightful radiance

The cover of the November issue of Carolina Country has truly touched my heart. It so very much reminds me of my own youth and a time when children delighted at riding on the tailgate and summer meant a time to enjoy mouthwatering peaches. More than anything else is the radiance on the faces of those barefoot children. What a delight to go barefoot without the fear of fire ants. Is there anyway to order a copy of this photograph?

Betty Horan
Lilesville

For prints of this photograph,
contact Scott Dingman
Photographer at (919) 856-0010.
E-mail: scott@scottdingman.com.
Web site: www.scottdingman.com

Tree hugger

I was trying to tie a vine to a tree in my yard so the vine would grow up the tree. As I wrapped my arms around the tree, trying to tie the vine, my great-grandson said to me, "Nanny, why are you hugging that tree?"

Chloma Yount
Granite Falls

Cement fertilizer for tomatoes?

I was hoping that one of your readers might have a recipe for fertilizing tomatoes. I vaguely remember one that had cement and epsom salts. There was at least one more ingredient, but I don't remember the amounts. This sounds like a strange combination, but it really did grow beautiful tomatoes. I would really appreciate if I could find someone that could tell me the ingredients and proportions.

Lucille Rice
Minnesott Beach

Dr. Watts First Catechism

I would like to know if anyone can help me locate information on a little book. The name is Dr. Watts First Catechism. It's asking questions concerning the Bible. We used to have them in our Sunday School classes.

Lillie A. Johnson
2918 Jack Richardson Road
Elizabethtown, NC 28337

One day on Interstate 40

I was raised up in Yadkin County, about 25 miles west of Winston-Salem. My grandfather owned a little country store, and about once a week he would go to Winston-Salem to get supplies for the store. He would take some of his grandchildren with him when he could go.

He owned a 1938 Chevrolet truck that had never been driven over 45 mph, most of the time only 35 mph. The state had just completed

Interstate 40 through Winston-Salem, and Granddaddy had never seen the new highway, so he decided to go that way home one day at 35 to 40 mph. Cars were passing my Granddaddy on both sides of the road, and he's still driving 35 mph.

A highway patrolman pulled him about half way to Clemmons. The patrolman asked to see his license and registration card, and both were all right. Then the patrolman said to Granddaddy, "Mr. Smith, do you know why I stopped you?"

Granddaddy answered, "Well I think so. You couldn't catch anybody else."

The patrolman grinned and said, "Just stay in the right-hand lane and be careful."

Burley Athan
Shallotte

"River Rations" benefits Yadkin County

Since you featured "River Rations – Recipes & Recollections of Rural Living" in your Carolina Kitchen department [September 2000], we have been filling dozens of orders from your readers. I've had the pleasure to read notes from former Yadkinians, people who have some connection to Yadkin County, people who just love rural North Carolina, and avid cookbook collectors.

Yadkin County charities that have benefited through "River Rations" sales include Yadkin SCAN (Stop Child Abuse Now), various church groups in the county, the Yadkin County Public Library, the Yadkin Animal Shelter & Adoption Advocates and the Yadkin Arts Council. I thank you on behalf of the charitable causes we are able to help as a result of publicity such as yours.

Emily Sarah Lineback
Whitline Ink
Boonville

See sample recipes from "River Rations" in Carolina Kitchen on our Web site:
www.carolinacountry.com

Let's mow!



This is our great-grandson Austin James Ottmer fixing his glasses so he can see how to mow the yard with our John Deere lawnmower. He's learning here at age 2 ½.

Floyd & Nora Kennedy
Potters Hill
Tri-County EMC

A freshman fall

When I was a freshman in high school, a very funny thing happened to me. Of course at the time it wasn't the least bit funny,

This was a time of short skirts and long hair, and girls still had to wear dresses to school. It was also a very "in" thing to wear short wigs.

I was making my way out of the building at the end of the school day, very pleased that I had made it without anyone snatching my wig off for fun. It was fall, and leaves would gather on the step and sometimes make it hard to walk. I made it down to the bottom step and promptly slid down, books flying, feet up in the air!

Needless to say, I was horrified, especially since there was a busload of teenagers watching and lots of others milling around. I jumped up and started gathering all my books as fast as possible, going toward the car where my father and sister sat waiting. To my ultimate horror a girl tapped me on the shoulder and pointed to something laying on the ground: my wig. I snatched it up, stuffed it under my arm and took off to the car where my father and sister were in tears, laughing!

I think my father has told everyone he's ever met about that day and still does, laughing uncontrollably.

Marsha Carrigan
2017 Buffalo Shoals Rd.
Lincolnton, NC 28092
Rutherford EMC

True confessions about turnips

In August's issue I really enjoyed the article titled "A time to eat green beans" by Gene Corpening. He has to know that most of us have least favorite vegetables.

My least favorite food is turnips. My parents made us kids sit at the table until everything was eaten. I tried to swallow turnips. I tried to spread them around the plate so they'd look like less. I tried to slip them to the dog. No luck. I'd have to sit at the table well past bedtime.

Mother was no fool. She'd make mashed potatoes the next night and mix in the leftover turnips. Guess who sat at the table again?

To this day, I can't eat turnips. Well, yes, I have had to eat them when a friend brought them to a potluck and they were watching. Glad I didn't gag. I know I wanted to. I can eat and enjoy turnip greens, but turnips are terrible!

Our son Brian lives in Boone. He has what he calls his "D" foods. If his wife, Traci, ever tries to serve him okra or Brussels sprouts, that will spell DIVORCE. You have to know that I love okra and Brussels sprouts. They were served often in my home. Guess these are Brian's "green beans."

Thank you for the article. I ate it up.

Marilyn Bergin
Sawmills
Blue Ridge Electric member

You can see Gene Corpening's "A Time to Eat Green Beans" at Tar Heel Tales on our Web site www.carolinacountry.com

Seen This Lately?



Buzz on the line

Ivan Hill, a member of EnergyUnited, photographed this hornet nest on a pole transformer near his home between Sandy Ridge and Lawsonville. As he correctly pointed out, people should not try to knock off these nests, but instead should contact their electric cooperative and mention the location of the pole.

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Web: www.carolinacountry.com



“Brushy Mountain Blues” By Ward H. Nichols

This new painting by North Carolina artist Ward H. Nichols shows the tranquility of fresh snow and shadows from bare winter trees in the Brushy Mountain region. The Brushy Mountains are a low range that run from Caldwell County northward and eastward into Alexander, Wilkes, Yadkin and Surry counties.

Ward Nichols is a realist painter whose versatility, technique and clarity of detail have earned him national and international recognition. As an active participant in the art scene, he has had three Artist-In-Residencies and his original paintings have been presented in 125 one-man shows in 22 states, 157 group shows and 26 national and international group exhibits.

He also has published a 224-page art book, “The Realism of Ward Nichols,” which carries more than 100 paintings, all in color, plus four signed and numbered limited-edition reproductions.

Top Drawer in Winston-Salem represents Ward Nichols and distributes the book and prints of “Brushy Mountain Blues.” Limited edition prints come in a packaged portfolio with an artist’s biography and certificate of authenticity. The image size is 10 by 30 inches. Contact Top Drawer, 209 West Third Street, Winston-Salem, NC 27101 or call (336) 725-8444.

Prices are as follows:

Signed and numbered print	\$135
Artists Proofs	\$175
Remarqued Proofs	\$215
Giclée Canvases (12 x 36)	\$475

N.C. residents add 6 percent sales tax. Shipping and handling is \$10.

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3770



Co-ops surpass \$2 million in Bright Ideas grants to teachers

North Carolina's electric cooperatives in 2000 topped the \$2 million mark in Bright Ideas grants given to the state's K-12 teachers and schools.



Gretchen Cordy, a popular member of the island cast in the CBS TV show "Survivor," arrives in Greenville to meet with eastern North Carolina teachers during the Bright Ideas recognition ceremony last November.

Since 1994, the co-ops have administered the education grants program that funds innovative classroom projects which teachers otherwise may not be able to implement. Including the 2000-2001 school year, the grants total topped 2,500 and funding surpassed \$2 million.

Co-ops in November conducted award ceremonies statewide to recognize this year's recipients. Among the guests at the ceremonies were this year's North Carolina Teacher of the Year, Laura Bilbro-Berry of Beaufort County, who has received three Bright Ideas grants in her career. Also, in Greenville, Gretchen Cordy, a popular cast member of the CBS-TV show "Survivor," congratulated Bright Ideas winners at a luncheon sponsored by the state's eastern cooperatives.

Gretchen Cordy is a teacher at a Tennessee preschool served by an electric co-op. And as a former teacher at a U.S. Air Force survivor training school, she spoke from experience when congratulating the teachers gathered in Greenville for their tenacity, patience "and your ability to outwit and outlast." She said she's learned that children can be more flexible and open-minded than they get credit for, and that innovative projects like those acknowledged at the luncheon are likely among the most effective lessons children receive.

The grant application process for 2001-02 Bright Ideas grants will open this spring. For more information, see the Web site at www.ncbrightideas.com

Co-op power sales outpace other electric utilities

Electric cooperatives sold 2.7 percent more electricity in 1999 than in 1998, according to the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. Total kilowatt-hour sales were 288 billion in 1999.

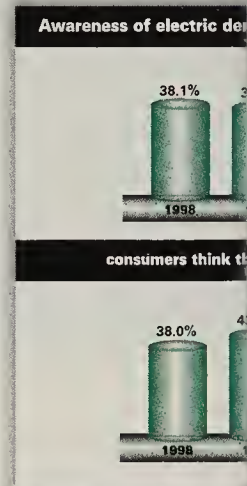
This growth was modest compared to the unusually strong 6.3 percent rise in 1998. However, co-op sales growth was still higher than the 1 percent growth for the entire industry.

Residential average monthly use actually declined from 1,078 to 1,066 kilowatt-hours. Total residential sales increased by a modest 1.6 percent, about the same as the industry in general. Mild weather was considered to affect the use pattern.

Given the strong U.S. economy, it is not surprising that co-op commercial and industrial sales were strong. Smaller businesses increased their use by 4.7 percent in 1999, while larger industries recorded a 5 percent rise. These sales also outpaced the nation's businesses as a whole, according to NRECA.

Geographically, the strongest kilowatt-hour sales growth was scattered throughout the U.S. The higher growth (above 3.5 percent) was in parts of the upper Midwest and West and as usual in the Southeast (but less so due to the mild weather.) Lowest growth was experienced in the Plains states.

In 1999, co-ops added 420,000 new accounts nationally. This translates to serving an additional 1 million persons. The total persons served by electric cooperatives reached 34 million, or about 11 percent of the U.S. population. The 3 percent consumer growth of co-ops is double that of the electric utility industry.



Study Commission leaders see deregulation on a slow track this session

The North Carolina General Assembly, which convenes this month, may address restructuring the state's electric utility industry this session, but sweeping, comprehensive legislation on the issue may not be one of the session's highest priorities.

In November, the legislators who co-chair the Study Commission on the Future of Electric Service in North Carolina told Freedom Newspapers that their colleagues may look at some aspects of utility industry restructuring but will most likely continue a careful, deliberative "go-slow" approach.

"I do not sense a burning desire to move this thing forward quickly," said Rep. Ronnie Smith of Carteret County, who co-chairs the commission with Sen. David Hoyle of Gaston County. Smith said he was polling other legislators to help determine how much priority to give the deregulation issue. Acknowledging that minds may change, Smith said that as of November, "The appetite is not here to do anything about deregulation and do it fast. The train is very, very slow on the track right now."

Sen. Hoyle said that the pressure from Congress to come up with a deregulation plan has eased and that deregulation is off to a rocky start in a few of the states that have opened the power supply market to retail competition.

Both Hoyle and Smith mentioned that

the Study Commission will continue to discuss the "stranded costs" issue that faces all utilities. These costs come from investments made by utilities when they built generation plants intended to serve consumers well into the future. These costs remain, even though the assured customer base and stable rate systems may dissolve in a fully competitive market. The 51 North Carolina cities that formed municipal power agencies potentially have the largest amount of stranded costs, more than \$5 billion, for investment in fossil and nuclear generation assets.

The state's electric cooperatives are seeking a comprehensive approach to settling the stranded cost issue, so that disparities in rates among all utilities would be considered equally. The cooperatives have proposed merger possibilities with municipal distribution utilities, pointing out that both cooperative and municipal entities are accountable to the consumer-owners, cooperatives are neighbors to the municipal customers and integrating resources would be economically beneficial to all consumers.

Hoyle said that retail competition for the power supply portion of a consumer's electricity account will eventually come to North Carolina, but the state's consideration and action on this issue will occur at a slow pace.

Consumer awareness of deregulation is on the rise

As the year 2000 drew to a close, about half of American consumers said they are aware of the movement toward electric industry deregulation, compared to about 37 percent the year before, according to a survey by Deloitte & Touche Energy/Utilities Services (see graph).

The survey also showed that consumer opinion shifted negative towards the effects of deregulation as a majority (52.7 percent) of consumers polled believed that rates will head up rather than down. Last year consumers were evenly split on the issue with 43.5 percent believing rates would go up and 43.2 percent down.

The poll is the latest in an annual series begun in 1996.

"The recent run up in oil and gas prices, along with the publicity concerning the price spikes in California electric markets, have had a strong impact on public opinion" reported Bob Hahne of Deloitte & Touche. "It appears that consumers are attributing the price increases to deregulation rather than market forces."

At the time of the survey, 23 states had passed legislation to open their retail markets to competing suppliers.

This year's survey shows consumers again expressed a preference for their local electric utility in the provision of electric service as compared to Internet companies or major oil companies. The margin remains high at 77.7 percent preference for the electrics, but it has dropped slightly from 79.7 percent, which may indicate increased opportunity for non-utility electric supply providers.

A new question this year concerned consumers' willingness to accept higher electric rates to pay for mitigation of global warming through the use of cleaner fuel technologies. A third of Americans (33.4 percent) responded that they were "not willing at all" to pay an additional 20 percent for cleaner fuels, while a minority (14 percent) indicated they were "very willing" and 12.2 percent answered "somewhat willing" to pay for such costs.

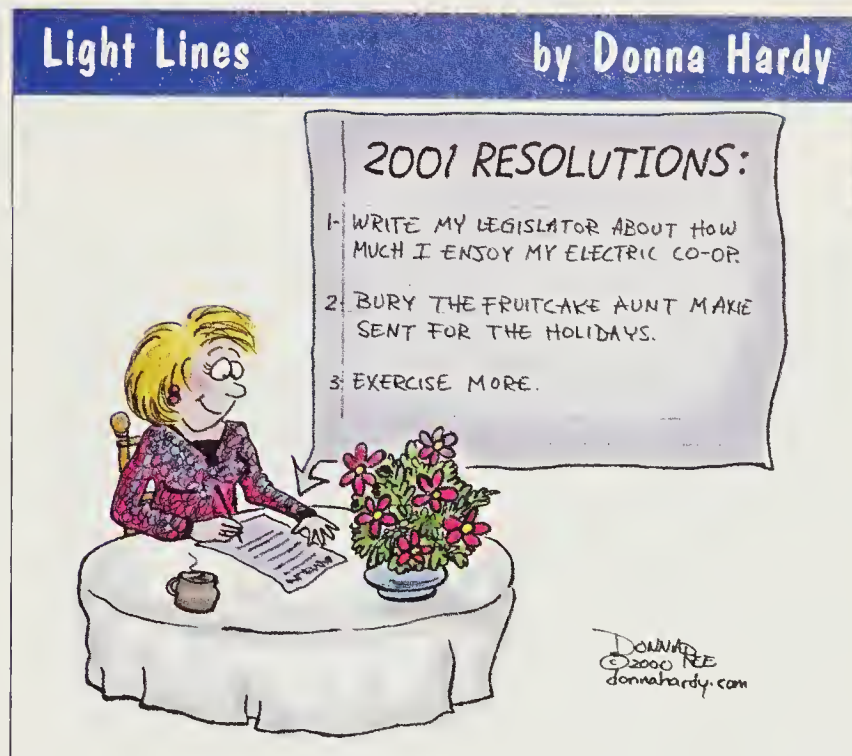
Congress may consider action on the nation's transmission system this year

"Power Plus" newsletter reports that the focus in Congress this year will move away from utility restructuring and toward relief for transmission capacity shortages. "No matter which political party controls Congress," the newsletter said in November, "the new strategy would include siting of transmission facilities and federal preemption. The realization is that the restructuring debate, as it is now framed, may be dead at the federal level."

Pointing out that about a dozen states are reconsidering their positions on restructuring due to price spikes, problems in states that have implemented deregulation and the financial woes of some utilities, the newsletter asserted that the key issue on a national level is to examine the capacity of the nation's power transmission systems to deliver electricity to where it's needed.

Light Lines

by Donna Hardy



North Carolina donates a line truck to Bolivian electric co-ops

With help from other cooperatives, the EnergyUnited electric cooperative, based in Statesville, donated an electric line truck to be used by two small co-ops in the Amazon Rain Forest of Bolivia.

The used digger-derrick truck was donated through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) International Foundation. It left

EnergyUnited Nov. 1 for the port of Charleston, S.C., where it was loaded onto a ship bound for Arica, Chile. From there, it began a journey by train to La Paz, the capital of Bolivia, from where it was driven three days to the Riberalta Cooperative, which serves 4,665 customers.

The donation was initiated by Dr. Max Walser and Jimmy Horton, two EnergyUnited board members. In 1998, they visited Riberalta, which has a sister-co-op relationship with EnergyUnited.

Walser explained that the city was originally built to harvest

natural rubber, but with the invention of rubber substitutes during World War II, that industry began to decline. Today, the city's residents are primarily employed in harvesting lumber

and Brazil nuts, which grow wild in the region.

Also contributing to the project were the following North Carolina electric cooperatives: Jones-Onslow, Carteret-Craven, Brunswick, Surry-Yadkin, Pee Dee,

Halifax, Edgecombe-Martin County and their statewide organization, North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation.

Since 1962, NRECA's International Program has worked to bring the U.S. co-op model to different nations. NRECA has active projects in several countries, including Bangladesh, Nepal, India, Mongolia, the Philippines, the Republic of Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Jordan, Bolivia, Honduras, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Mexico and Colombia and working relationships in 50 other countries.



This line truck took a long trip to South America this winter on its way to help electric co-ops in Bolivia.

How are cooperatives preparing for the new energy market?



A conversation with Chuck Terrill

As state governments consider electric industry changes nationwide, utilities gain opportunities to offer more services to more customers. Geographic boundaries are no longer as restrictive as they once were. New businesses are forming to offer products and services that at one time were available only from a few traditional utilities. And consumers themselves face an array of choices that can become as overwhelming as they are beneficial.

Where do the nation's 900 consumer-owned electric cooperatives fit into this picture? How well are they positioned to do business in an ever-widening utilities market?

Chuck Terrill recently addressed these issues in an interview with Advanced Energy, a Raleigh-based non-profit corporation that helps utility, industrial and residential customers increase energy efficiency and productivity. Terrill heads the North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation, which is a member of Advanced Energy. With Advanced Energy's permission, portions of that interview are reprinted here.

Chuck Terrill is the CEO of the companies organized by North Carolina's 27 electric cooperatives, serving more than 800,000 households and businesses in 93 of North Carolina's 100 counties. These companies include:

- North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation, one of the nation's leading power supply cooperatives providing nearly 3,000 megawatts net peak power to its 26 member cooperatives.
- North Carolina Association of Electric Cooperatives that provides training, government and public relations and publishes Carolina Country magazine for the state's cooperatives.
- Tarheel Electric Membership Association, a material supply and purchasing organization for electric cooperatives and other utilities.
- TSE Services that provides energy-related and aggregation services to cooperative organizations and businesses nationwide.

Prior to heading the North Carolina cooperatives' statewide organizations, Terrill worked with cooperative power suppliers in Kansas and Indiana for more than 20 years. He currently is a member of the board of directors of the national Touchstone Energy network, and has served on the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association board. Terrill and his wife, Barbara, live in Raleigh and have two children, a daughter, Beth, and a son, Jeff.

“Electric cooperatives are uniquely poised to put consumers together to take advantages of market strength. These can be residential, commercial and industrial customers — the more diversity, the better.”

Q: Historically, cooperatives have focused on serving residential customers. Are cooperatives expanding their focus as deregulation and restructuring advance on the national horizon?

A: Electric cooperatives nationwide and in North Carolina historically focused on residential and small commercial customers for a good reason. These customers formed and built the electric cooperatives where no central station electrical service previously existed. However, these rural communities needed more than electricity to thrive. They needed jobs, good jobs, in order to provide strength and economic vigor for their families, homes and livelihoods. As time went on, electric cooperatives became economic development engines in their counties and regions. It was a matter of economic survival. The increasing focus on commercial and industrial accounts is what drives our local, state and national economic health.

Research done for the electric cooperative industry clearly demonstrates that one of our strengths is "serving customers, large and small." While cooperatives originally focused on small customers — because that's what we served given our locale — we have worked to enhance our communities by partnering with business and industry. Together, we work to strengthen local education, housing and health care opportunities to support the welfare of our towns.

Q: How will restructuring affect the cooperatives' opportunities in the coming years?

A: I found it interesting that as the debate on customer "choice" unfolded, business, and small business especially, hit on the term "aggregation" as one of the key components of how they would benefit from choice. For the last 60 years, electric cooperatives have been aggregating load. As the toy store puts it: "Aggregation 'R' Us." Electric cooperatives are, in their simplest form, a group of consumers who formed a distribution (and/or power supply) organization to provide power more economically than they could do themselves. In numbers, there's market power.

So electric cooperatives are uniquely poised to put consumers together to take advantages of market strength. Now, these can be residential, commercial and industrial customers — the more diversity, the better. In electricity, you look for load diversity to strengthen economic efficiencies and build market presence.

Again, the research shows that cooperatives have a unique "leg-up" in this arena. We are known for our ability to focus on customers, large and small.

Q: What strengths do cooperatives bring?

A: When deregulation discussions first surfaced, some wondered whether electric cooperatives would survive. I guess it's because we're seen as local, individual and isolated. We realized that there was a perception problem. Cooperatives, like other electric utilities, just did our jobs. We didn't promote ourselves. Today, we are Touchstone Energy®, the nationwide network of independent electric cooperatives committed to providing superior

Today, we are Touchstone Energy®, the nationwide network of independent electric cooperatives committed to providing superior service at affordable rates to all customers.

service at affordable rates to all customers large and small. Our strengths over our past 60 years will serve us well into the future: "Integrity, Innovation, Accountability and Commitment to Community." Those core strengths will serve us into the future.

Q: What challenges face the cooperatives in the new regulatory setting?

A: Our biggest challenge will be to carry the message of who are the cooperatives and what is our point of differentiation in the unfolding utility environment. Our mission will be to educate, educate and educate. We must communicate with our cooperative members, the public at large, and our opinion leaders regarding our strengths, mission and "Consumers First" focus. Our greatest challenge is also our greatest opportunity.

Q: What kinds of proactive things are North Carolina cooperatives doing to take advantage of the new situation?

A: North Carolina cooperatives began looking at creating operational efficiencies among their own business practices a decade ago. Things they could do together rather than creating 27 different systems. From this, they began to work together to see where the future may take them. They realized that other parts of the country, where electric prices were higher than in North Carolina, were going ahead with deregulation and, most likely, choice would come to North Carolina sometime in the future. They recognized that North Carolina needed to get ready.

When Pennsylvania's governor called the state's utilities into a room and the General Assembly passed deregulation the next week, there was little planning time for these utilities. There was time only to react. The North Carolina cooperatives knew that they could

not wait until it happened to us. We needed to learn as much as possible as quickly as possible. Among other things, the North Carolina cooperatives agreed to help our fellow cooperatives by dispatching key personnel to assist the Pennsylvania cooperatives in staffing their implementation teams. We learned a lot about what works well and what doesn't.

When other cooperative organizations — the New York City housing cooperatives and cooperative groups in New England — began putting together cooperative energy aggregation groups, the North Carolina cooperatives saw this as another way for "cooperatives to help cooperatives." Building business systems to accommodate customer care and the electronic data

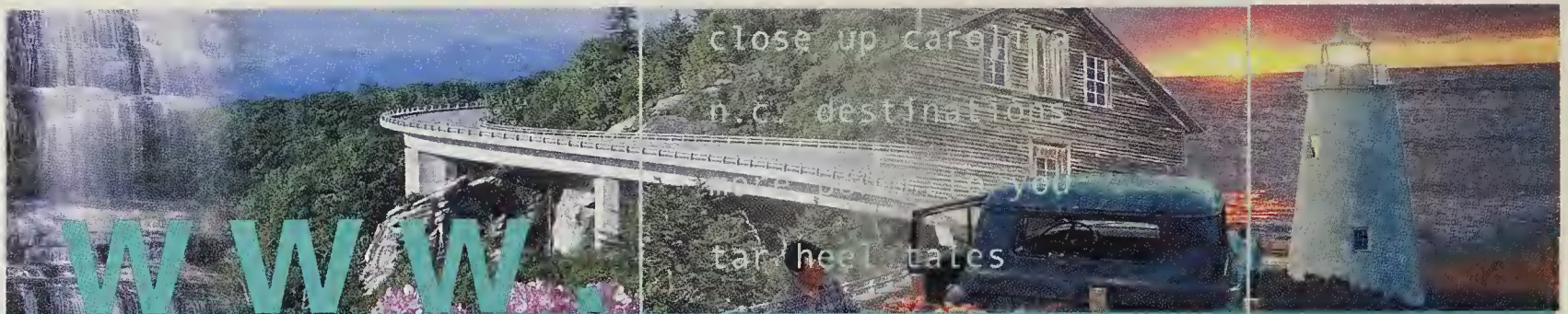
exchange requirements would be time intensive and expensive to create. Just as they thought 10 years ago, "Why create the wheel twenty-seven different ways when we can create it really well once" seemed to make sense in this situation.

Building cooperative models works not only for residential customers, but also for commercial and industrial customers. Again, this takes us back to the Touchstone Energy® tenets.

So, our cooperatives formed TSE Services to provide customer care, energy-related and aggregation services. TSE Services is working with the First Rochdale group in New York City on "back office" services for residential and commercial customer aggregation. TSE Services is also working in the Northeast with cooperative businesses on energy services, as well as with other cooperatives in various states.

Q: What should cooperatives do to stay viable and competitive?

A: I really don't believe there is a cooperative anywhere in the US that is not already taking steps to adapt and remain viable and competitive. However, I would admit that some are more active than others depending on their state's legislative and regulatory appetite for deregulation. The first step is to educate cooperative boards, management and key staff. Invite cooperatives from states where deregulation is happening to find out their successes and missteps. Educate your consumers about what's going on through your statewide magazines and your cooperative's newsletters. Electric cooperatives reach an unbelievable number of consumers. We are trustworthy and represent consumers. Education is always the best place to start. Our minds are open to ways to serve customers better.




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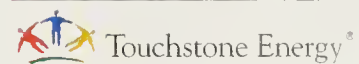
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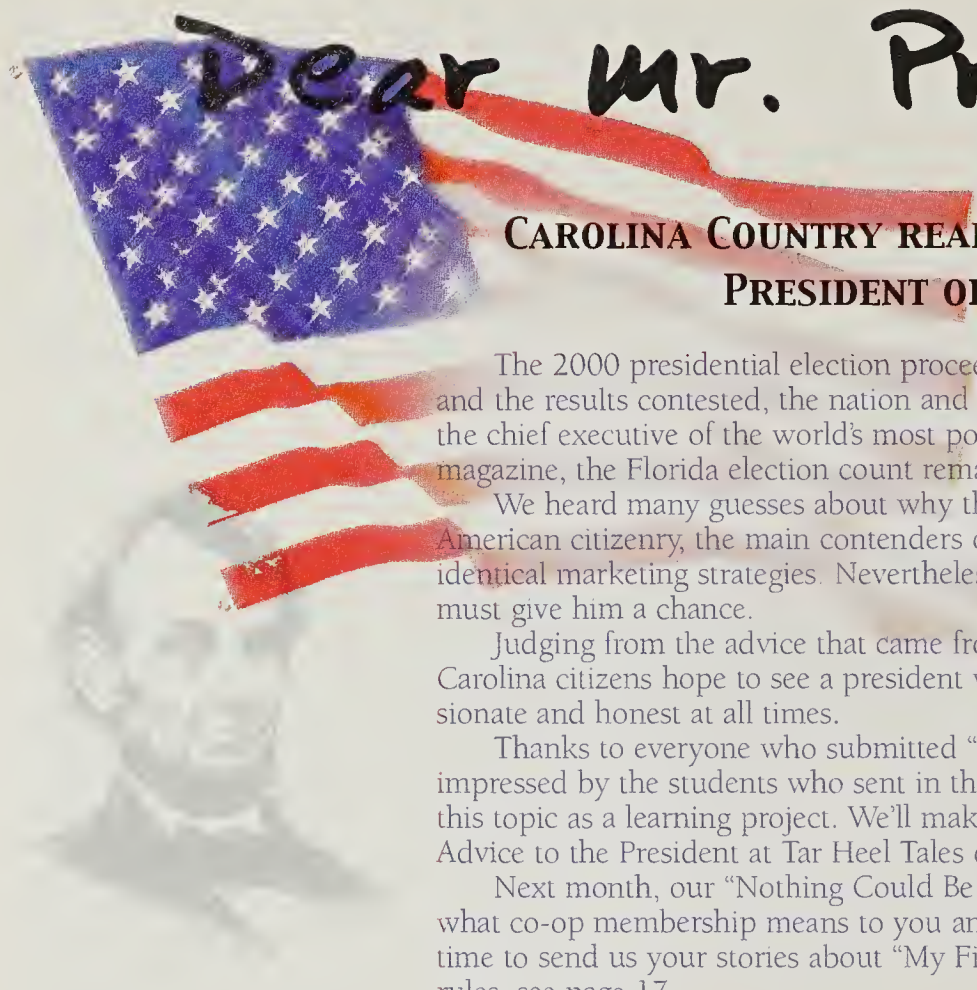


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North Carolina's
electric cooperatives





Dear Mr. President

CAROLINA COUNTRY READERS OFFER ADVICE TO THE NEW PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

The 2000 presidential election proceeded in historic fashion. Because it was so close, and the results contested, the nation and the world did not know for weeks who would be the chief executive of the world's most powerful country. In fact, as we prepared the January magazine, the Florida election count remained in legal limbo.

We heard many guesses about why the election was so close: a deep chasm divides the American citizenry, the main contenders offered no real choice, the campaigns followed identical marketing strategies. Nevertheless, the system produced a President, and now we must give him a chance.

Judging from the advice that came from Carolina Country readers last fall, North Carolina citizens hope to see a president who is a strong leader, but who remains compassionate and honest at all times.

Thanks to everyone who submitted "Advice for the New President." We were especially impressed by the students who sent in their advice, and we thank the teachers who chose this topic as a learning project. We'll make sure the White House sees the results. (See more Advice to the President at Tar Heel Tales on our Web site at www.carolinacountry.com.)

Next month, our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series publishes your comments on what co-op membership means to you and your family. (Deadline was Dec. 15.) There's still time to send us your stories about "My First Date." (Deadline is Jan. 15.) For the themes and rules, see page 17.

— Michael Gery

LEARN ABOUT THE REAL NORTH CAROLINA

Let me assure you that everyone who lives in North Carolina is not a true native of the Tar Heel state. Because of the rapid growth in the Research Triangle Park and the Piedmont Triad and the need for those mega-companies to bring in their own staff, there are many who call North Carolina home by choice and not by heritage. For that reason, the picture that you get may not reflect the needs of the native North Carolinians.

Get off of the I-85, I-95 and I-40 corridors and travel through the once prosperous towns and farmlands of this melting pot state and you will see where the real needs lie. Family farms that at one time employed many people and provided food and cash crops for the state have now been abandoned. Large signs displaying the date of the public auction stand where tractors used to plow the fields. No doubt these lands will be subdivided and developed for the influx of white-collar business people being transferred into the area.

Large shells of former manufacturing facilities that provided life-sustaining jobs for small towns are now vacant. The only people who stand to benefit from them are the out-of-state real estate brokers that are listed on the signs posted on the side of the building reading "Commercial Property For Sale or Lease."

While North Carolina has one of the most

sought after college education systems in the country, the public education system doesn't even provide enough educational background for most of North Carolina's own to qualify ahead of the out-of-state candidates for openings in these institutions of higher learning.

North Carolina and its natives put up a strong front for the world, but many are suffering quietly from the restrictions put on tobacco, pork and other leading cash crops. Instead of demanding help, many of these farmers just tighten their belts and continue to try and exist in a faltering market.

Steeped in history and beauty from the Great Smoky Mountains to the Crystal Coast, North Carolina has everything to offer this great country, and, except when hit by devastating hurricanes, is forgotten by the federal government.

I wish you luck and all of God's blessings during your upcoming term as the chief of the nation. That's another thing that North Carolinians believe in: God. This is the Bible Belt. Not only have our farms and livelihoods been taken away from us, we can't even observe prayer in our schools. Prayer is sometimes all that gets us through. Help us if you can.

**Melinda Johnson
Vaughan
Halifax EMC**

SPARE US THOSE TESTS!

There are a lot of ways to make North Carolina and the rest of the United States a better place. Lots of issues vacillate throughout the country, but I am an advocate for education, and I believe it can be ameliorated.

In many states, schools require students to take a test at the end of the year to determine if they pass on to the next grade or not. Some students get nervous and don't pass it and cannot pass their grade, even if they have a 98 average for the year. The state of North Carolina has this criterion, too.

I think schools should give tests to students, but their progress throughout the year should determine if they pass their grade or fail. They shouldn't use only one test at the end of the year to determine this.

Another alternative could be to reduce class sizes so students could be more comfortable. Then they would be OK with taking the standardized tests at the end of the year. With a large class of students, they may get nervous and make mistakes. Everyone is fallible, but nervousness can make a person even more fallible.

Please extricate us from these tests.

Jay Rountree
Belvidere
Albemarle EMC

BAN VIOLENCE FROM TV

I feel that all TV shows with violence should be banned from all TV stations during the night. Why? Because so many kids are being influenced by so-called heroes, and that may lead them to destruction. Just think! If this nation was to become a place that believed in taking an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. Then it would be a nation that's blind and toothless. If you are a good president, then I know you can and will prevent violence.

Glenn Wiggins
Hertford
Albemarle EMC

HELP THE LESS FORTUNATE

The most important thing to take care of is world starvation. No one on this earth should go days without eating or drinking. When I look at the TV commercials about children around the world who are starving, it makes me

feel ashamed and embarrassed of my country. I see high class people walk around eating expensive foods, and hardly eating what's on the plate, then they happen to look across the street and see a little girl or boy rubbing their hungry stomachs because they haven't eaten anything in two days, and the people don't even try to bring them over what's left over. They just throw it away.

Mr. President, I try to help all the ones I can, but I can't do it all by myself. I am low class, but I would rather give to the less fortunate.

Satoria Parker
Hertford
Albemarle EMC

ATTEND TO THE IMMIGRANTS, ENVIRONMENT AND SCHOOLS

The advice I would give the new president of the United States is from Mark Twain: Never let your education get in the way of your schoolin'. As you take up the duty as the nation's leader, always be willing to learn from others.

America has more immigrants now than ever. These immigrants are enduring many hardships as they work and raise their families. Our president needs to learn about their culture, fears and dreams.

America also has an ever-changing environment. The president needs to learn about the shortage of water and oil supplies and see firsthand the devastation of wildlife and plant life.

Finally, the president needs to visit many of the schools across America. By doing this, he will engage in thought-provoking conversations with the teenagers and, thus, hear their voices of hope or despair.

Despite all the formal education a president achieves, dealing with real life issues will be the best schoolin' for the job at hand. The cries, laughs, fears and dreams of the people will give him much more knowledge than a lifetime of formal education ever could.

Megan Phillips
Matthews
Union Power

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Here are the themes in our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series. Send us your stories and pictures.

March 2001

"My First Date"

Who, when, where, why and what happened.

Deadline: Jan. 15

April 2001

"Believe It or Not"

Tell us a true story that's hard to believe.

Deadline: Feb. 15

May 2001

"The View From Here"

What is the view from your window?

Deadline: March 15

June 2001

"Working in the Country"

What is the finest way to earn a living?

Deadline: April 15

July 2001

"The Finest Drive in North Carolina"

Where is it, what's there? Send pictures.

Deadline: May 15

August 2001

"The Finest Thing a Teacher Told Me"

Why did it make a difference?

Deadline: June 15

September 2001

"The Finest Photo in North Carolina"

Color or B&W. People, places.

Deadline: July 15

October 2001

"The Finest Restaurant in North Carolina"

Whose is it, and why is it so good?

Deadline: Aug. 15

November 2001

"The Best Thing That Ever Happened to North Carolina"

Long ago or recently.

Deadline: Sept. 15

December 2001

"The Finest Person in My Life"

Tell us why.

Deadline: Oct. 15

The Rules

1. Approximately 200 words or less.
2. Only one entry per household per month.
3. E-mail or typed, if possible. Otherwise, make it legible.
4. Include your name, electric co-op, mailing address and phone number.
5. If you want your entry returned, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. (We will not return others.)
6. We pay \$50 for each submission published.
7. We will post on our Web site more entries than we publish, but can't pay for those submissions.
8. Send to Nothing Finer, Carolina Country, 3400 Sumner Blvd., Raleigh, NC 27616. Or by e-mail: carolina.country@ncemcs.com. Or through the Web site: www.carolinacountry.com.

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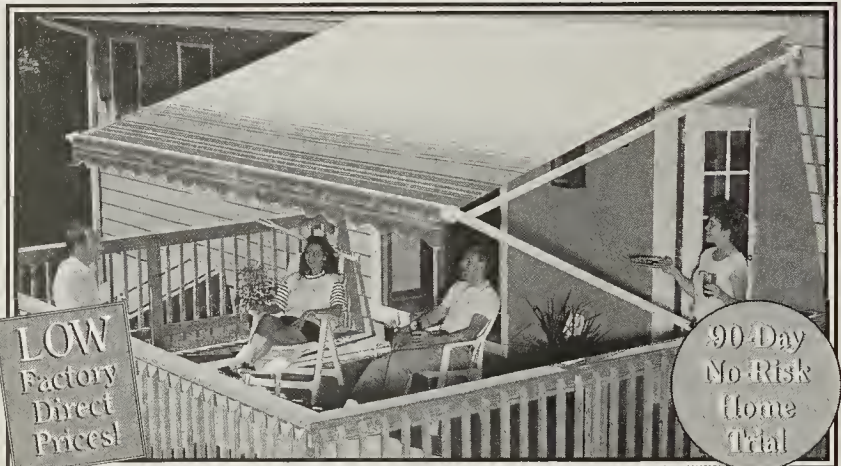
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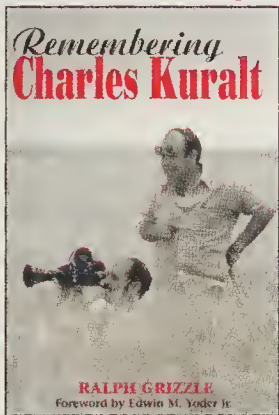
Welcome to The Carolina Country Store

We've begun stocking the shelves of the new Carolina Country Store. It's our way of showcasing and supporting the growing economy of the North Carolina countryside.

We are open 24 hours a day, every day, at www.carolinacountry.com. Next time you're in the Web neighborhood, stop in at The Carolina Country Store. These pages show a sampling of what's in stock.

Brigitte Ting is the store's designer. Send your comments or suggestions to our storekeeper Elisa Cottrell through the Web site or at Carolina.country@ncemcs.com.

"Remembering Charles Kuralt"



Based on nearly 100 interviews with Charles Kuralt, his friends, family and colleagues, "Remembering Charles Kuralt" is the tale of a North Carolina farm boy who went on to become one of America's most admired television journalists. Author Ralph Grizzle, who is a University of

North Carolina at Chapel Hill graduate as Kuralt was, was commissioned by the university to conduct a series of oral histories with Charles Kuralt's friends, family and colleagues. The 288-page book sells in hardcover for \$25 and is also available at bookstores. Call (800) 456-1505 or visit www.rememberingcharleskuralt.com.

The Old Mill of Guilford

For more than 23 years, Charles Parnell and his wife, Heidi, have been operating the Old Mill of Guilford 364 days a year. You can visit this working mill, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, every day except Christmas. Located just outside of Greensboro, the mill's gift shop provides visitors with the opportunity to take home a wide variety of stone-ground meals, flour, muffins or cookies made on the premises without preservatives or chemicals. The Old Mill of Guilford, located in Oak Ridge just north of Greensboro at 1340 Hwy. 68 North, is open daily from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Admission is free. Call (336) 643-4783 or visit www.greensboronc.org

Free Internet magazine about the Outer Banks

If you are concerned about the commercialization that is taking place on the Outer Banks, then check out "Surf and Turf." "Surf and Turf" is a free Internet magazine committed to offer-

ing periodic information about the Outer Banks' environment. You can also find links to other Outer Banks' Web sites when you go to www.envirobx.com.

"Amazing Journeys" at OMNI-MAX

Imagine 600,000 zebras traveling over 500 miles through the plains of East Africa to avoid drought and find better food sources. You can now experience the spectacle of the Great Migration in the new IMAX film, "Amazing Journeys," showing at the OMNIMAX Theatre at Discovery Place in Charlotte. Experience the 2,500-mile migration of the monarch butterfly, and the 5,000-mile migration of the gray whales along the Pacific coast of the United States, along with other amazing animal migrations from all over the world. The film will be showing through March 2001. Call the OMNIMAX at (704) 372-6261 or visit www.discoveryplace.org.

Merlefest 2001

Tickets for Merlefest 2001, scheduled for April 26-29 at Wilkes Community College in Wilkesboro, are now on sale. This four-day event, in honor of Merle Watson, will celebrate the down-home musicianship of America's premiere bluegrass, folk, and jazz music. Over 80 artists from across the world are scheduled to play during the festival, which features more than 10 different stages, and a special "Little Pickers" area for kids. Call (800) 343-7857 or go to www.merlefest.org.



A North Carolina recipe magazine



In many ways, North Carolina is known for its unique fare. From the seafood to down-home southern cooking, the possibilities are endless. The magazine North Carolina's Taste•Full: The Flavor of the Carolina Lifestyle gives you access to that famous Carolina cuisine. The latest issue of the magazine featured New Bern's Maola Ice Cream, a North Carolina apple orchard near Pilot Mountain, the restaurants of Sylva, and many recipes. A year's subscription (6 issues) is \$19.95. Call (888) 499-NCTF or visit www.taste-full.com.

Exhibit honors Commissioner Jim Graham

An exhibit running Jan. 4 through April 4 at the North Carolina State University Libraries celebrates the 36-year career of North Carolina's Commissioner of Agriculture Jim Graham. "The Sodbather: A Friend of Agriculture in North Carolina" uses photographs and artifacts to describe Graham's work promoting and developing agriculture in North Carolina. The exhibit, which will be on display in the circulation lobby of the D. H. Hill Library, also uses materials drawn from the library's Special Collections Department. A virtual exhibit mounted by the Special Collections staff at the NCSU Libraries will enable off-site perusal of the materials displayed in the exhibit, as well as the opportunity to read "The Sodbather," Graham's recollections of his career as "a friend of agriculture." The D. H. Hill Library is located on the NC State Brickyard, near the intersection of Hillsborough and Gardner streets, and is wheelchair accessible. For more information, contact Bernie McTigue or Caroline Weaver at (919) 515-2273. You can visit the virtual exhibit online at www.lib.ncsu.edu/archives/exhibits/sodbather

A new law protects our estuaries

The U.S. Congress recently passed landmark legislation to revitalize coastal communities and restore one million acres of essential coastal habitat. The Estuaries and Clean Waters Act of 2000 is a comprehensive approach to coastal habitat restoration and authorizes \$275 million over five years toward this purpose. In addition to providing habitat for 75 percent of our commercial fish catch, estuaries are visited by over 190 million Americans every year. North Carolina is home to 2.1 million acres of inland estuaries. For more information about what you can do to protect North Carolina's coast, contact the North Carolina Coastal Federation at (252) 393-8185 or www.ncccoast.org.

Backyard Memories, Front Porch Dreams

Ever wondered why collards aren't a weed and honeysuckle is? Or wondered why you don't spell cucumber with a "Q"? Discover the answers to these and other questions in Larry Cribb's new book, "Backyard Memories, Front Porch Dreams." From the long-time editor of "Living in South Carolina Magazine" comes a book about growing up during the 40s and 50s on the coast of South Carolina. "There have been days in my life when good memories played a mighty important role in pulling me through tough times. They are true treasures," says author, Larry Cribb. The 152-page book costs \$15.70, which includes shipping and sales tax. Contact Larry Cribb at 1900 Elm Abode, Columbia, SC 29210 or email him at rlcribb@aol.com.

Golf privileges from the American Lung Association

For 18 years, the American Lung Association of North Carolina has been offering the Golf Privilege Card® Program. The Golf Privilege Card allows holders to play for free, or at greatly reduced rates, at more than 300 golf courses throughout Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina. Cardholders will receive a book listing participating courses. The card is good for one year and makes an excellent gift. Call (800) 849-5949 or visit www.lungnc.org.



Heirloom Canopies

Heirloom Canopies in Creston, N.C. has beautiful lace canopies, specially made to fit flat or arch canopy beds, for sale online. Prices range from \$175 for twin canopies to \$225 for king size canopies. All canopies are made from pre-shrunk cotton and hand-tied from start to finish. Visit www.heirloomcanopies.com or call (336) 385-1135.

How to Host

"Many people today live a very transient lifestyle, and finding comfort and hospitality in our busy lives is like a cool drink of water in the desert," says North Carolina native, Jacquelyn Napier Ford, author of a new handbook, "Welcome Guest: The Gift of Hospitality." With more than 10 years of experience in over 15 different countries, Jacquelyn provides practical advice on how to enjoy your guests, and not just put up with them. Quick recipes, advice on serving impromptu meals, setting a beautiful table, and tips on preparing comfortable guest rooms will help you relax the next time someone comes to visit. To order the 70-page book, send a check payable to "Welcome Guest" for \$5 plus \$1 for shipping and handling to "Welcome Guest," 3986 Blackberry Road, Lenoir, NC 28645-8891.



Duke Health and Fitness Center

The latest report from the American Medical Association calls obesity "a critical public health problem." The Duke Center for Living and the Duke Diet & Fitness Center in Durham are trying to combat that problem by providing people with the education to make lasting lifestyle changes. The Duke Diet & Fitness Center provides residential treatment for obesity, while the Center for Living offers a wide range of classes and equipment to meet a wide range of personal goals. Whether dealing with a specific disease, or just looking to make some positive lifestyle changes, the Center for Living has a trained staff of specialists with diverse areas of expertise ready to help. Call (800) 235-3853 or go to www.dukecenter.org.



Carolina

clothing

Technically engineered apparel for athletes

Nestled in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in western North Carolina, DeFeet began making socks in 1992. Shane Cooper had been knitting socks with his father from a very young age. When Shane started bicycle racing in his early 20s, he found that the socks available to athletes were antiquated. Soon after, the DeFeet Air-E-Ator was born, and from that, many more types of sports and activity apparel were added to their line. DeFeet products have been used in the Tour de France, golf's US Open, the Ironman triathlon, and even the Superbowl. Visit their Web site at www.defeet.com.

Military and other rugged footwear

Third-generation shoemakers in the Great Smoky Mountains area of western North Carolina founded Wellco Enterprises in 1941 as a manufacturer of quality rugged footwear. Check out their selection of military/rugged action boots, and work boots/safety toe footwear on their Web site www.wellco.com or call (888) 841-4466.



Cuisine

Elijah's Restaurant, Wilmington



Located on the east bank of the Cape Fear River on Chandler's Wharf, Elijah's Restaurant is located in an old maritime museum where many of the rare paintings, ship models, and nautical artifacts remain

in the dining rooms, along with modern work by local artists. Dine in the oyster bar or enjoy their Cape Fear Stuffed Shrimp (jumbo shrimp with fresh crab) in the dining room. Entrees range from \$10.95 to \$18.95 for dinner, with lunch ranging from \$4.95 to \$7.95. Visit their website at www.elijahs.com or call (910) 343-1448.

B Flat Cafe, High Point

For fine dining in a casual atmosphere, check out the B Flat Cafe in High Point, specializing in jazz-oriented, New Orleans and Creole style food. Live jazz on the weekends. Visit www.bflatcafe.nv.switchboard.com or call (336) 887-0094.

Lulu's On Main, Sylva

Named Southern Living's favorite restaurant of the region, Lulu's On Main in Sylva features a varied menu and imaginative preparation. One of the most popular items on the menu is Pasta Salad ala Greque, a dish of warm pasta, topped with feta cheese, Greek olives, fresh tomatoes, fresh red onions, pepperoncini, walnuts, parsley, a touch of red pepper flakes, and homemade lemon oil dressing. Other favorites include the Salmon Lulu and Tropical Pork Tenderloins. Prices range from \$5.25-\$16.95 depending on if you're eating lunch or dinner. Visit their Web site www.lulusonmain.com or call (828) 586-8989.

Weeping Radish Restaurant and Brewery, Outer Banks

If you're on the Outer Banks, then you're not far from authentic German food and freshly brewed beer. With locations in Manteo, Kitty Hawk, and Corolla, the Weeping Radish is a popular hot spot with people from all over the country. Sample their in-house brews while snacking on Warne Bretze (a hot German pretzel) or enjoying one of the many German entrees served in the restaurant. Tours of the brewing area are available April through October. Visit their Web site at www.weepingradish.com or call (800) 896-5403.

Carolina Causes

North Carolina Coastal Federation

Formed by eight grassroots concern groups in 1982, the North Carolina Coastal Federation (NCCF) "seeks to protect and restore the state's coastal environment, culture and economy through citizen involvement in the management of coastal resources." In order to achieve the above, the NCCF concentrates its programs on habitat protection and restoration; environmental law and order; and environmental education. With over 5,000 members, 250 active volunteers, and 11 paid staff members, the NCCF is the largest coastal conservation group in the state. For more information about how you can become involved with NCCF's effort to protect our coast, visit their Web site at www.nccoast.org.



Sierra Club of North Carolina

While the Sierra Club has traditionally been committed to the preservation of wild and scenic lands, its conservation agenda for today in North Carolina also encompasses clean water/animal waste, smart growth, transit reform and air quality. Visit their Web site at www.sierraclubnc.org/chapter/index.html.

Special Olympics of North Carolina

It is because of volunteers that Special Olympics North Carolina is able to offer year-round training and competition to more than 25,000 athletes across the state. Volunteers are needed year round at the local level, area level and state level. In addition to the Summer and Fall Games, Special Olympics North Carolina also holds state-level tournaments in basketball, equestrian events and alpine skiing. Visit www.ncso.org/getinvolved_v.htm or contact Jolin Eckman, volunteer manager at Special Olympics North Carolina, at (800) 843-6276, ext. 116.

Volunteer opportunities at North Carolina state historic sites

If you love North Carolina and love history, consider volunteering for one of the state's historic sites.

Many different types of volunteer opportunities exist including clerical assistance in the office, gardening and grounds upkeep, docents and tour guides, or domestic skills and crafts demonstrators. To find out more about volunteering, visit www.ah.dcr.state.nc.us/sections/hs/vols/volun.htm or write to Volunteer Opportunities, 109 E. Jones St., Raleigh, NC 27601. For general information about North Carolina's historic sites, visit www.ah.dcr.state.nc.us/sections/hs/default.htm.



New Options for Internet Searching

There's nothing more central to the Internet than searching for what you need, and there's nothing that changes at Internet speed as much as Internet search sites.

The Internet search industry is in a state of upheaval. Familiar names are losing their usefulness, in some cases with top management bailing out. Meanwhile, upstarts are trying to buy your patronage. Fortunately, a few standouts are eminently click-worthy.

Web old-timers, many of whom are still in their 20s, probably remember Yanoff's List, the first widely used compilation of useful Internet destinations, created in 1991. It bit the dust in 1995 when overtaken by Yahoo, which went on to make its creators, Stanford University Ph.D. students David Filo and Jerry Yang, billionaires.

Yahoo, at www.yahoo.com, has remained the dominant Web directory, organizing the vast stretches of cyberspace into a semblance of a library card catalog and helping surfers find their way.

Unfortunately, Yahoo as a search tool has lost its own way recently as the company has diversified into a dizzying array of other Net activities, including but not limited to shopping, business-to-business e-commerce, Web e-mail, Web hosting, Web telephony, streaming video and multimedia software.

You're better off going elsewhere if you're looking for good Web sites. Many key sites aren't included in Yahoo's categories, some of its "Most Popular Sites" are wildly esoteric, and site submissions to it may never show up.

A smarter choice for browsing categories of sites is a newer service called Open Directory Project, at www.dmoz.com. Spearheaded by Netscape, now a part of America Online, it has a database useful enough to be licensed by AltaVista, HotBot, Lycos, and MetaCrawler, among some one hundred other sites.

AltaVista, at www.altavista.com, is another early big name in the Internet search game experiencing a loss of stature. It was the first popular pure search engine, relying upon technology instead of people in sending its automated "spiders" to crawl through the Web and index what they found.

Search engines such as AltaVista were and still are better at finding narrowly defined information, while directories such as Open Directory Project and Yahoo are better at presenting broad categories of information.

Despite its promising start, AltaVista suffered from a dearth of investment early on, and it has been superseded by newer search engines that return more relevant results. Recently it slashed 25 percent of its workforce and its CEO resigned.

The hottest search engine today is Google, at

www.google.com, officially launched during the fall of 1999. It uses sophisticated technology that returns site results based on the number of other sites that link to specific information on a site. When key sites, such as CNN.com, link to a site, that's counted more heavily.

The end result: An uncanny ability to turn up what you're looking for.

So confident is Google in its technology that it includes an "I'm Feeling Lucky" option. If you click on that after typing in your search terms, Google will take you directly to the site it feels is most relevant.

This is mostly braggadocio, though tolerable under the circumstances. You're usually better off looking at its list of possible sites, with brief excerpts, before deciding yourself which way to head off to. Still, the technology works so well that more than 100 other sites have licensed it.

Some new search sites are trying to gain your surf-time by throwing money at you.

The leader here is iWon.com, at www.iwon.com. Backed by CBS, it has extensively advertised on television its \$1 million-a-month sweepstakes giveaways. In aggregating news and other content to encourage users to stick

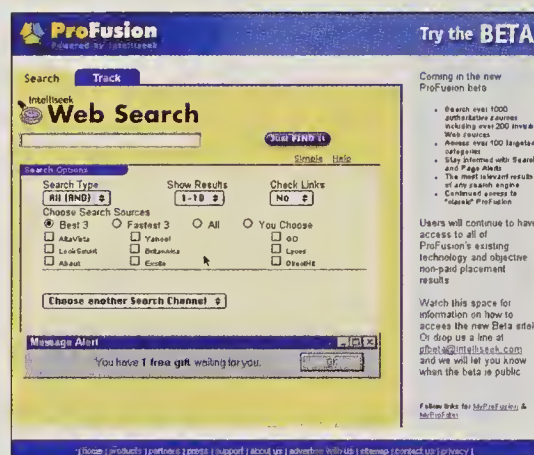
around and read ads, it's better as a "portal" than a search site.

But so far iWon's strategy seems to be working. It's now the 21st most visited Web site, according to the latest numbers from Media Metrix. And it's good to its word, recently awarding its 12th million-dollar monthly prize to a New Jersey resident.

Despite recent advances, searching through the Internet's murky depths is still an inexact science, and it sometimes pays to use more than one search site. You can do this automatically with a "metasearch" site. After you type in your search terms, it sends them out to a number of search sites and compiles the results.

The best metasearch sites are ProFusion, at www.profusion.com, and MetaCrawler, at www.metacrawler.com.

Finally, despite the Web's technological wizardry, sometimes you can't beat the human touch. AskMe.com, at www.askme.com, is one of a number of so-called expert sites whose volunteer staffers try to dig up information for you.



Reid Goldsborough is a syndicated columnist and author of the book "Straight Talk About the Information Superhighway." He can be reached at reidgold@netaxs.com or <http://members.home.net/reidgold>.

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--Dorothy Burks

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Future fish farmers of America

North Carolina schools are teaching ways to grow fish

"There's something about fish and fire," says instructor Ted Manzer, speaking of two fail-proof ways to capture the attention of his high school students. While Manzer has yet to find a way to bring fire into his classroom on a regular basis, over the past three years he has



Ted Manzer shows one of the tilapia grown by his students in the aquaculture program at Northeastern High School in Elizabeth City.

Practical Fun

Aquaculture programs are appearing throughout eastern North Carolina, where fish farmers grow everything from catfish, hybrid striped bass and tilapia in ponds and tanks, to clams and oysters offshore. Bringing this new field into the classroom introduces future farmers to this fastest growing sector of agriculture. And it gives students the opportunity to make practical application of the science and math skills they have learned at their desks, all the while building on the fascination that most of us have with the water environment and its creatures.

Ted Manzer's class cultures tilapia (pronounced ti-LAP-ia), a hardy warm-water fish that is grown in ponds in tropical climates and in indoor tanks throughout the country. At the 100 or so tilapia farms in the U.S., the fish are raised at densities of nearly one pound of fish per gallon of water (imagine a one-pound fish living and thriving in a gallon jug of water). The high school students grow fish in about four times as much water, but they still utilize the same equipment as their commercial counterparts: tanks to contain the fish; pumps to circulate water from the fish tanks through filters and back again; aerators that agitate the water to add extra oxygen; and equipment to measure water quality parameters like oxygen, pH, and ammonia.

"We put the system together ourselves," says Manzer, noting that his students learn everything from plumbing and construction to build and maintain the culture system, to biology and water chemistry, so that their fish remain healthy and grow.

Taking something new to the fair

At the other end of the state, Barry Bey and his aquaculture class at Brunswick High School had another successful year at the New Hanover County Fair. Each year his students load up four or five pick-ups with aquaria, fish and poster displays. Their hard work pays off; they have won the Best of Show award for each of the past 10 years.

Bey's 14-year program ("fourteen years of fun and adventure," says Bey) is the largest in the state, with two dozen large aquaria housing native as well as exotic fish, 10 thousand-gallon tanks holding larger carp and tilapia, and four quarter-acre ponds in which the students are growing catfish, bream and largemouth bass. "We spawn the fish

and produce the fingerlings [the baby fish] for all the native fish that we stock in the ponds," says Bey.

The Brunswick program is unique in that it allows seniors to take classes in the aquaculture curriculum at Brunswick Community

College, and those credits can then be transferred to the biology program at UNC-Wilmington. "We're the only program in the country that has that kind of tie-in all the way to a four-year degree," says Bey. Several graduates from the community college are aquaculturists in the Wilmington area.



The tank systems growing tilapia in North Carolina high schools are miniatures of those on commercial tilapia farms, like this one located in the North Carolina piedmont. Each of these tanks contains 25,000 gallons of water, and about the same number of pounds of fish.

Bright Ideas helps Carteret



As teachers find out about the possibilities of integrating aquaculture into the curriculum, they need both information and money to get started. Tom Sawyer of Carteret High School learned what he needed to build and run his system at the N.C. Aquaculture Conference (www.ncaquaculture.org), held early each year in New Bern, and by talking to North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service agents that specialize in aquaculture.

Once he got the information, it was time to find the funding.

A major source of money was the North Carolina Bright Ideas grant program (www.ncbrightideas.com). Sponsored by electric cooperatives statewide and the North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation, Bright Ideas supplies funds for innovative instructional projects that schools could not otherwise afford. Tom Sawyer teamed up with Cecil Shelton, Carteret's environmental sciences teacher, to write the grant that would buy two 750-gallon tanks, pumps and filters. The tanks were stocked with tilapia in the spring of 2000.

Rebecca Irvine, President of Carteret's Future Farmers of America, talks enthusiastically about the program: "Putting the system together and making it work really got the students to team-up and work together." Students would often head to the library after school to do research on caring for the fish. Irvine says the students really felt that they were making a difference and solving real problems: "They weren't just questions on a worksheet." And students from last year's class still take an interest. "They come back to ask about the fish," she says. "It's their baby."

Irvine plans to attend N.C. State University in the fall to major in agriculture education. She hopes one day to have her own high school agricultural program somewhere close to home in eastern North Carolina. "And if I do, I definitely plan to include aquaculture," she says.

Rebecca Dunning is an aquaculture specialist with the N.C. Department of Agriculture. Her previous Carolina Country articles on crawfish and oyster farming are on our Web site at www.carolinacountry.com.

To learn more about growing tilapia in indoor tank systems, and on setting up a high school aquaculture program, attend the North Carolina Aquaculture Development Conference, February 1-3, 2001, at the Sheraton Hotel in New Bern. Contact: Michelle Baker, N.C. Department of Agriculture, (919)/733-7125. Also, see www.ncaquaculture.org

The Aquatic Chicken

Tilapia are a group of two dozen species of freshwater, plant-eating fish native to Africa. Tilapia have been cultured for thousands of years, and are recognized as an ideal fish for aquaculture; they grow quickly under a variety of environmental conditions, breed easily in captivity, and are very efficient converters of feed to fish meat. Because the tilapia is so suitable for farming, it has been likened to other farmed livestock and is often referred to as "the aquatic chicken."

Tilapia cannot survive in water temperatures lower than about 60 degrees, so they are cultured in tanks in cooler climates. North Carolina has one tilapia hatchery, a processing plant and a half-dozen tank operations. Production of this popular fish is growing and should reach nearly 20 million pounds for the U.S. in 2001. About one million pounds are expected from North Carolina growers.



Cecil Shelton, environmental instructor at East Carteret High School, displays a market-size tilapia (one and a half to two pounds).

The following recipe is from Tonya Halsey, chef at Waterman's Restaurant in Edenton.

Waterman's Cashew Crusted Tilapia with Tomato Basil Cream Sauce

Prepare the fried fillets:

Dip tilapia fillets into self-rising flour and then into an egg wash (of 4 eggs to 1 cup milk). Then dip fillets again into a mixture of equal parts self-rising flour and crushed cashews. Fry fillets in hot oil until crisp. Serve with Tomato Basil Cream Sauce.

Tomato Basil Cream Sauce

Chop two cloves of garlic and cook until transparent in one tablespoon of olive oil. Add one can tomato pieces and simmer 3-4 minutes. Add 1 1/2 cup heavy cream and simmer on reduced heat for 5-10 minutes. Add 8-10 leaves of chopped fresh basil. Then simmer an additional 10 minutes.

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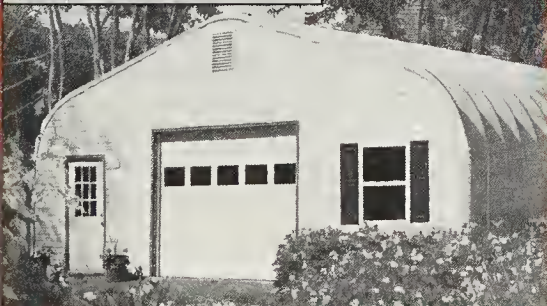
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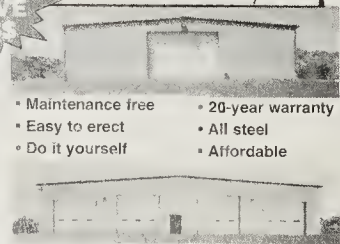
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W R

N N

T 6

A T

6

A W

R E

R W

W R

W R

MATH words

Letters have been substituted for digits in this division puzzle. Repeated letters stand for repeated digits. Given T=6, can you replace the missing digits to find how many **SNOWS** are in this **WINTER**?



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y a h t p n c c b c g e l o c g c

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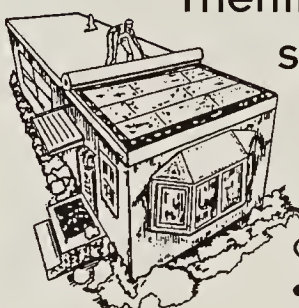
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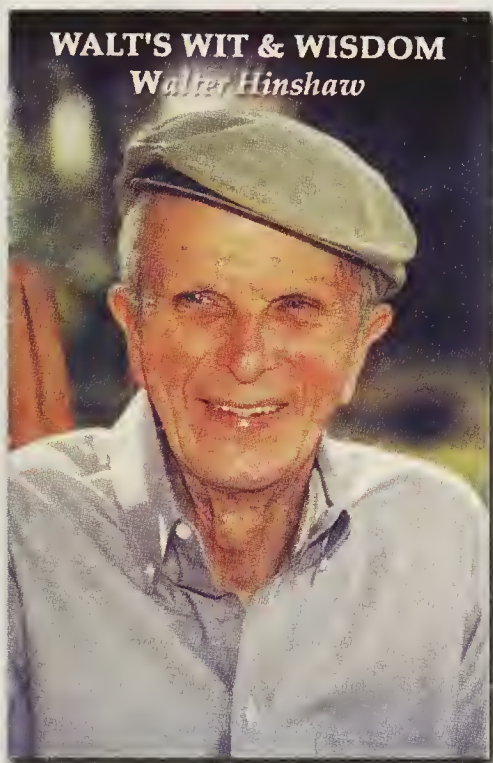


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Catfish and Tars

by *Walter Hinshaw*

I have run into some characters in my time, most especially in my traveling years. This one I haven't forgot 'cause he was one of a kind. He was smart, as you will see later, but he was a seedy lookin' guy. He needed a bath, haircut, shave and some clean clothes.

Anyhow, I was in this mill in Catawba, North Carolina, makin' my call when this guy comes walkin' in askin' if we had any old balloon tars. Neither the mill owner nor I had any idea what he was talkin' about. He kept sayin' that he needed some old, used balloon tars. A few minutes went by and we finally figured out he was talkin' about tires. Why in the world would he want old balloon tires? Finally, we asked him what he needed the "tars" for. He said he was usin' them to catch catfish in Lake Norman. He was sellin' them to a fish market in Charlotte. Well how in the world do you catch catfish with old balloon tars? He told us how to do it, and here's his story.

You lace the inside of the tars together and then you cut a big hole in the tread. Then you take some really big nails and drive them on one side of this big hole in the tar, tie a piece of rope to the tar and tie a plastic jug to the other end as a marker, and throw it in the water. The rope must be long enough for the tar to set on the bottom of the lake. He said that catfish were curious so they swim into this big hole lookin' for cover or food, and when they get 'round to the nails they can't get out. I said, "Well, why don't they just back out?" He said it was simple 'cause a catfish ain't got no reverse, so he can't swim back'ards.

Now I didn't know that a catfish ain't got no reverse, had never even crossed my mind, hadn't even ever thought about it. This seedy character had told me something I didn't know. I doubt that I'll ever use this knowledge, but it is nice to know. Until such time I give it a try, I'll just take his word for it. After all he's catchin' catfish.

I don't know if'n a freshly showered guy in a new suit, close shave with a good haircut would have ever figured out how to use old tars to catch catfish or not. Reminds me of my first patent. I was havin' trouble with my post holes, gettin'

water in them down near the crick. Water would run in the hole 'fore I could plant the post. An old coffee can, the lid, a sharp knife, two carpet tacks and a long stick created a bailing device that I later got a patent on. With this homemade device I was able to bail the water and fluid mud out of the hole without gettin' my hands dirty or even havin' to bend down and get my clothes dirty.

I've learned to never judge a man's knowledge by his looks. Life is a learning experience.

Thanks for readin' my story

Walter Hinshaw on tape

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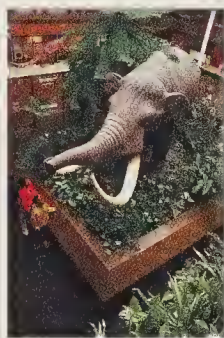


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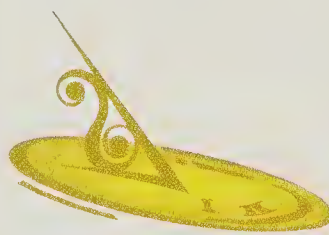
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"Endangered Species"

Through Jan. 21, Chapel Hill
Andy Warhol Exhibit,
(919) 966-5736

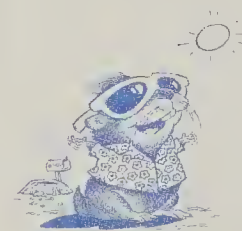
"Ansel Adams, A Legacy"

Jan. 27 – March 18, Fayetteville
Exhibit at Museum of Art,
(910) 485-5121



Southern Farm Show

Jan. 31 – Feb. 2, Raleigh
NC State Fairgrounds,
(800) 849-0248



Groundhog Day

Feb. 2, Raleigh
North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences,
(919) 733-7450,
www.naturalsciences.org



Photo courtesy of NC Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development

Old Salem

Living with History: Views of Salem's Past

Through April 6, Winston-Salem
The Gallery at Old Salem,
(888) 653-7253,
www.oldsalem.org



COAST (East of I-95)

Ramsey Lewis Trio

Jan. 13, Wilmington
Jazz concert, (800) 523-2820



Henry Doskey Concert

Jan. 13, Oriental
Pianist, (252) 249-3079,
www.pamlicomusic.org

"Charles B. Aycock's North Carolina"

Jan. 19-20, Goldsboro
Symposium at Aycock
Birthplace, (919) 242-5581

Model Railroad Show and Sale

Jan. 20-21, Wilmington
(910) 458-9401

"What makes Baroque baroque?"

Jan. 26, Oriental
Music appreciation program,
(252) 249-3079,
www.pamlicomusic.org

Antique Show and Sale

Jan. 26-28, Wilmington
Coast Line Convention Center,
(910) 799-3993

"As Long as the Waters Flow"

Feb. 1-11, Wilmington
Photography exhibit of con-
temporary Native American
culture, St. John's Museum of
Art, (910) 763-0281,
www.stjohnsmuseum.com



Photo courtesy of NC Division of
Tourism, Film and Sports
Development.

Thalian Hall, Wilmington
Site of the North Carolina
Jazz Festival, Feb. 1-3

North Carolina Jazz Festival

Feb. 1-3, Wilmington
(910) 763-8585

Chamber Orchestra Kremlin

Feb. 3, Wilmington
UNCW Kenan Auditorium,
(800) 732-3643

"How Does Your Garden Grow?" Show

Feb. 3-4, Wilmington
Coast Line Convention Center,
(910) 270-4515



Deadline for March Jan. 24

Deadline for April Feb. 23

A phone number must be included with
event listings in order to be published.

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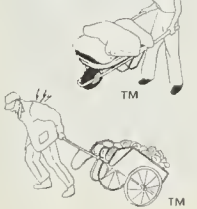


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With the arrival of mid-winter, come thoughts and plans for spring gardens – along with concern for protecting plants from blasts of cold. Check evergreens to be sure they are not suffering from lack of soil moisture. Broadleaf evergreens subjected to blowing winds will lose considerable moisture through foliage. This moisture must be replaced by the root system from moisture within the soil. If soil is dry, let water run slowly until area around the root zone (soil located between the trunk or main stems and the "drip zone" beneath tips of branches) is thoroughly moistened. Newly planted rose bushes benefit from a 4-to 5-inch mound of soil beneath plants. On grafted plants, take care to cover the graft with soil.

Hort Shorts

- Planting deciduous plants during the dormant season will aid in good growth for the spring.
- If a plant needs cutting back, leave severe pruning until late winter or early spring, just before plants will be putting forth new growth.
- Never place manure in the planting home of a tree or shrub. Instead, apply manure as top dressing in early spring, but be sure to use old, decayed manure.
- A balled-and-burlapped plant requires approximately a year to become established in its new planting home.
- A good potting soil for houseplants is made of equal parts of good garden soil, peat moss, and sand or perlite.
- During winter months, keep houseplants out of overheated rooms. Few plants grow well in the dry atmosphere of 70-75 degrees F. When temperature rises to 75 F and above for long periods of time, most potted plants fail.
- If winter rains are scarce, evergreens need a good watering each week.
- Keep fertilizing of houseplants to a minimum. Too much plant food can promote an excess of spindly growth during these less than ideal conditions.
- Cyclamen, the popular flowering houseplant, grows best in soil, which is ever moist, but not waterlogged. Always apply water around the edges of the pot.
- Study seed and nursery catalogs before making plans for spring and summer gardens. Check with local nurseries and seed supply houses for those adapted to your area.
- For a whole year's gardening guide, visit our Web site at www.carolinacountry.com

Winter watering

Water your garden in the mornings during winter months, so that moisture can be absorbed before nightfall, reducing the incidence of fungus diseases. Some folks are under the mistaken impression that as long as the sky is overcast or temperature is low, it is not necessary to apply water. But cold, dry winds can damage plants, removing moisture from the soil and from plant tissues, in just a few minutes. The true and tested way to determine if a plant needs water is to examine the soil by scraping away a few inches of topsoil. If the removed soil is dry, then water is needed.

A garden under glass

Indoor gardens, assembled in clear glass containers with lids, create interesting additions to home interiors. They're effective during any season, but especially appropriate for winter months. Potting soil



creates the root base while small-scale plants can be grouped into a garden scene. Small ceramic figures can add interest. Consider a small ceramic frog beneath a leaf or sitting on a pebble; a little Santa at Christmas; miniature rabbit and eggs at Easter; Uncle Sam for Fourth of July; or a miniature turkey for Thanksgiving. Care should be taken not to over water, make sure soil is completely dry before adding water. Every three or four months add a few drops of liquid fertilizer to water. When interior of glass becomes cloudy or coated with drops of moisture, remove lid until glass becomes clear.

Staking trees

After planting bare root trees and larger balled-and-burlapped trees, stake them by extending three or four lines from the trunks (about 5 feet above the ground) outward 4 to 5 feet. Wrap trees with burlap at the point where lines are attached to trunks so trunk will not be damaged. Staking reduces tree movement in the wind and prevents damage to young hair roots.

Placing large-growing shrubs

Use tall and wide shrubs only at corners of the building, along borders of the yard areas and wherever screening effect is desired. If large shrubs are planted near the foundation, they will hide the house, cut off the view, and restrict movement of light and air within the house.

Delay pruning

Many shrubs, such as lilac, forsythia, azalea, rhododendron and weigelia, produce flowering buds in the summer. Wait until they have bloomed, then cut back severely to make plants bushy. Always prune shrubs to their natural habit and form of growth. Exceptions are severely pruned, low-growing shrubs used to edge formal gardens.

Too tidy – too bad

Too much neatness in the flower garden can do harm. Fallen leaves, anchored by dead stalks of hardy plants, will offer protection for the young sprouts from the base. If the debris is insect and disease free, it often is best to let these remain through the winter. Healthy stalks over the crown of a plant, anchor the root system as well as providing winter mulch.

Ask Hank

Q: Can you give me some information on rooting abelia and nandina?

A: Abelia cuttings are easily rooted in a half and half mixture of clean sharp (builder's) sand and peat moss. Make cuttings 4-to 6- inches long, removing leaves from the lower 2 inches of cuttings. Dusting base of cuttings with Roottome causes them to root faster and develop a better root system. Keep rooting medium damp not soaking wet. Cuttings need oxygen to form root. Nandina is best propagated by seed or by dividing clumps. Plant seeds when they mature, either outside or in containers. Use good loamy garden soil. Often, small plants originate when seed is dropped from established plants.

Send your questions for Hank to Carolina.country@ncemcs.com or P.O. Box 27306, Raleigh, NC 27611.

Carolina Country classified ads cost \$2 per word, prepaid. Minimum ad \$20. Maximum 75 words. Same ad on Web site is \$20 per month. Send ad and payment to Classifieds, Carolina Country, P.O. Box 27306, Raleigh, NC 27611. For more information and a printed form to use for your ad, see our Web site at www.carolinacountry.com and click on the Advertising section.

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Unscramble it: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

Joey's corner answers

An Anniversary Book of Recipes from Tri-County EMC

To mark its 60th anniversary, Tri-County Electric Membership Corporation has published a cookbook of recipes submitted by the co-op's members. Included are more than 300 recipes, plus helpful hints interspersed throughout the cookbook.

To order the 194-page, 3-ring binder cookbook, send a \$12 check or money order to Tri-County Electric Membership Corporation, P.O. Box 130, Dudley, NC 28333. Each cookbook costs \$10 plus \$2 for shipping and handling. For more information, you can call the Tri-County EMC at (919) 735-2611.

Here are a few examples of what you'll find in the Tri-County EMC 60th Anniversary Cookbook:

Tri-County EMC

When local residents formed the cooperative in 1940, Tri-County Electric Membership Corporation ran 304 miles of electric line to the rural areas around Wayne and Duplin counties in eastern North Carolina. Today the cooperative serves more than 20,000 consumers along its 2,391 miles of line in Wayne, Duplin, Lenoir, Johnston, Jones, Sampson and Wilson counties. In 1977, the EMC moved from its original office in Goldsboro to its current headquarters in Dudley. Tri-County EMC is a Touchstone Energy cooperative, committed to the principles of integrity, accountability, innovation and commitment to community.

Bohemian Tomatoes

1 (1 pound) can tomatoes
1 cup diced celery
1 large chopped onion
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped green pepper
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup butter
1 teaspoon salt
 $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon pepper
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup buttered bread crumbs
Brown sugar to taste

Mix tomatoes, celery, onion, green pepper, butter, salt, pepper and brown sugar together. Place in buttered casserole. Top with bread crumbs and bake uncovered in a moderate 375-degree oven for 1 hour or until it is cooked down and soft.

"This is very good with grilled chicken or steak."

Joyce and Garland Cooke, Goldsboro

Asa's Soon-to-be-famous Steak Marinade

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup olive oil
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup lemon juice
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup soy sauce
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup Worcestershire sauce
3 cloves garlic (about $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon garlic powder)

Mix oil, lemon juice, soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce and garlic in a gallon Zip-Loc freezer bag. Add meat to marinade and refrigerate 1 or more hours.

"This is also good for pork or chicken. This makes a lot of marinade. I usually half it for two to four people."

Iris Kilpatrick, Mount Olive

Grandma Edna's Black Forest Cake

1 box Duncan Hines chocolate cake mix
1 box chocolate instant pudding
1 package Dream Whip
Cool Whip or butter cream frosting
1 to 2 cans cherry pie filling

Mix dry cake mix, dry instant pudding and dry Dream Whip together in mixing bowl. Continue to make batter by following directions on cake box. Pour batter into 2 prepared round cake pans. Bake according to directions on box. Let layers completely cook. Slice each layer horizontally in half to make 4 layers. Spread Cool Whip or butter cream frosting, topped with cherry pie filling between each layer and on top of cake.

Pete Jones, Mount Olive

Helpful Hints:

- To flavor iced tea: dissolve old-fashioned lemon drops or hard mint candy in the tea. They melt quickly and keep the tea brisk!
- To keep hot oil from splattering, sprinkle a little salt or flour in the pan before frying.
- Tomatoes added to roasts will help to naturally tenderize them. Tomatoes contain an acid that works well to break down meats.
- The freshness of eggs can be tested by placing them in a large bowl of cold water; if they float, do not use them.
- Professionally decorated cakes have a silky, molten look. To get that appearance, frost your cake as usual, then use a hair dryer to blow-dry the surface. The slight melting of the frosting will give it that lustrous appearance.

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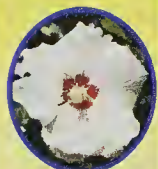
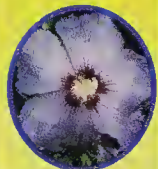
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